

Sūrah Muddaththir

Central Theme and Relationship with the Previous *Sūrah*

This *sūrah* is the counterpart of Sūrah Muzzammil, the previous *sūrah*: There is no essential difference between the central themes of both *sūrahs*. Even their names share the same meaning. The previous *sūrah* directs the Prophet (sws) to prepare for bearing the burden of a heavy word. It is this *sūrah* which explicitly explains what is meant by bearing this burden: he should prepare himself to take up the responsibility of *indhār* (warning people of the Hereafter) and should strongly adhere to his stance even if people violently oppose him. He should leave their matter to God and always remember that his responsibility is solely to remind people through this Qur'ān. He is not responsible for making them accept it. Only those people will accept it, who in accordance with the law and practice of God, are worthy of this acceptance. Those who are not worthy shall always remain indifferent to it however much the Prophet (sws) tries to guide them.

Analysis of the Discourse

Following is an analysis of the discourse of this *sūrah*.

Verses (1-10): The Prophet (sws) is directed to discharge his mission of warning people of the Hereafter with full preparation. He should declare the greatness of His Lord and cleanse and purge his heart from everything which may tarnish it. He should keep himself away from all traces of polytheism and continue with his efforts. For the sake of his Lord, he should hold his ground against all hostilities. The Almighty will make all his efforts bear fruit and the call of Islam will be spread far and wide.

Verses (11-17): The Prophet (sws) should well inform the people about the afflictions of the Day of Judgement. The Day shall be very severe for the disbelievers and they should not consider it to be an easy affair. Those who, inebriated by their riches and status, reckon that on the Day of Judgement, if it comes at all, they shall be given even more than what they presently have, must remember a bare fact: when the Almighty had created them from the wombs of their mothers they were totally alone in this world; they neither had wealth nor status at that time. It was the Almighty who blessed them with wealth and status; but instead of being

grateful to their Lord, conceit and vanity overcame them and they held that whatever they had was their right by birth and they would be blessed with even more in the Hereafter. This, it is clear, is a totally false claim. If as a result of this, they rise against the Qur'ān, then they should remember that they will have to face a very severe penalty.

Verses (18-25): A depiction of the excuse fashioned by the arrogant leaders of Quraysh to deny the Qur'ān and of the disdainful way in which they actually presented this excuse. Sorrow is expressed at this attitude. It is very unfortunate that their estimation about the Qur'ān is totally wrong: they reckoned it to be a miracle of a prophet's stirring and eloquent speech and never paid attention to its warning; the fact of the matter is that each and every sentence of it is a reality which they will soon encounter.

Verses (26-31): A description of Hell which the disbelievers will encounter. These disbelievers used to indulge in vain talk about it. An assertion of the fact that since these disbelievers are overcome by the false claim that they have knowledge of everything, they will make fun of this description and say that such statements are of no use. The truth of the matter is that this description is based on the wisdom of the Almighty. Those who have the desire for the truth will benefit from it, while those who in spite of their ignorant claim of being know-alls will adopt an attitude which shall ruin their fate.

Verses (32-48): An argument on the Hereafter from the manifestations of nature is presented and wonder is expressed at the ignorance of those who are unmindful of the greatest upheaval of the universe. The Qur'ān is informing them about it so that all those who want to prepare for it can do so and those who want to evade it are left with no excuse but stubbornness. They should remember that on that Day each person will be held in pledge for his own deeds. Only his deeds will liberate him or lead him to the torment of Hell. No one's deeds or intercession will be of any benefit for any other person. Only the companions of the right hand (*ashāb al-yamīn*) will be declared as the victors; they shall live comfortably in Paradise and from there they will inquire from those who will be put in Hell as to what led them to it. In reply, the dwellers of Hell will openly confess the crimes which led them to their state of doom.

Verses (49-52): Wonder is expressed at those who are fleeing from the Message of the Qur'ān and the real reason which is making them flee is indicated. The Prophet (sws) is directed to ignore them. His responsibility is only to remind them. Those who do not benefit from this, will see for themselves its dire consequences. Only those shall benefit from it who according to the Almighty's laws deserve to benefit from it.

Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ (١) قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ (٢) وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ (٣) وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ (٤) وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (٥)
وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ (٦) وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ (٧) فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ (٨) فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مِثْلُ يَوْمِ عَسِيرٍ
(٩) عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ (١٠) ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا (١١) وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا
(١٢) وَبَنِينَ شُهودًا (١٣) وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا (١٤) ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ (١٥) كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ
لَا يَأْتِنَا غَنِيْدًا (١٦) سَأَرْهِفُهُ صَعُودًا (١٧) إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ (١٨) فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (١٩) ثُمَّ
قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (٢٠) ثُمَّ نَظَرَ (٢١) ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ (٢٢) ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ (٢٣) فَقَالَ إِنْ
هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ (٢٤) إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ (٢٥) سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ (٢٦) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا
سَقَرُ (٢٧) لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ (٢٨) لَوَاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ (٢٩) عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ (٣٠) وَمَا جَعَلْنَا
أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْبَشَرِ (٣١)
كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ (٣٢) وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ (٣٣) وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ (٣٤) إِنَّهَا لَإِحدى الْكُتُبِ (٣٥)
نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ (٣٦) لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ (٣٧) كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
رَهِينَةٌ (٣٨) إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ (٣٩) فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٤٠) عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (٤١) مَا
سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ (٤٢) قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمَصْلِينَ (٤٣) وَلَمْ نَكُ نَطْعُمُ الْمَسْكِينِ (٤٤)
وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ (٤٥) وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بَيُّومَ الدِّينِ (٤٦) حَتَّى أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ (٤٧)
فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ (٤٨) فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِيرِ مُعْرِضِينَ (٤٩) كَانَتْهُمْ حُمْرٌ
مُسْتَنْفَرَةٌ (٥٠) فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ (٥١) بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى صُحُفًا مُنَشَّرَةٌ (٥٢)
كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ (٥٣) كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ (٥٤) فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ (٥٥) وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا
أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْمَعْفِرَةِ (٥٦)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

O ye enfolded in the shawl! Arise and warn people. And proclaim the greatness of your Lord only, and cleanse the apparel [of your heart] and

keep away from impurity and do not discontinue your endeavour regarding it to be more. And show perseverance in the way of your Lord. (1-7)

Thus, when the trumpet is sounded, that Day will be very severe. It will not be easy for the disbelievers. Leave to Me whom I have created alone and bestowed abundant wealth and sons abiding in his presence and fully smoothed out for him the way. Still he expects that I shall give him more. Certainly not! He has turned out to be an enemy of Our revelations. Soon I will make him climb a mounting slope. (8-17)

He pondered and schemed. Cursed be he; what he schemed! Then cursed be he, what a wrong scheme he made. Then he looked about. Then he frowned and made a face. Then he turned away and became arrogant. Then said: "This is nothing but a magic which is being handed down from the past! It is nothing but the word of man!" (18-25)

I will soon cast him into Hell. And what have you understood what Hell is? It will neither show mercy nor spare anyone. It scorches the skin. Over it are nineteen angels. (26-30)

And We have appointed none but angels as the keepers of Hell and have mentioned their number only to make it a test for those who have disbelieved. So that the People of the Book receive assurance from this and the believers may increase in their faith and that the People of the Book and the believers have no doubt about it. And so that those who have an ailment in their hearts and those who have disbelieved say: "What can God mean by this mention?" In this way, God leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases. And no one knows the armies of your Lord except He. And this matter is just a reminder for man. (31)

Certainly not! The moon bears witness and the night also when it turns its back and the morning when it shines forth that this matter is from among the great matters narrated to warn man. For every person among you who wants to advance forward or wants to turn away. Every soul shall be held in pledge for its own deeds. The only exception will be the people of the right hand. They will be in gardens inquiring after the wrongdoers. They will ask: "What has brought you into Hell?" They will reply: "We were not among those who prayed nor did we feed the poor and we used to quibble with these quibblers and used to deny this Day of Reckoning till there came to us this moment of certainty." (32-47)

So, no intercession of the intercessors will be of any use to them. What then is the matter with them that they are turning away from the Reminder, as though they are frightened asses fleeing from a lion? In fact, each one of them desires that he be handed open scrolls. Certainly not! They, in fact, have no fear of the Hereafter. Certainly not! This is just a Reminder. So let him, who wills, take heed – and they will not take heed unless God so wills. He alone is pious and worthy of being forgiven. (48-56)

Explanation

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ (١) قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ (٢)¹

The words مُدَّثِّر and مُزْمَل are synonymous. The latter is from دَثَّر and refers to a shawl a person that uses to cover himself while sleeping.

As I have explained in the exegesis of the previous *sūrah*, covering one's self with a shawl is a symbol of being pensive and worried. The experiences of divine contact which the Prophet (sws) went through at the beginning of his prophethood were in themselves very onerous. When he mentioned these experiences to his family and they started to make fun of them, his worries increased. In these circumstances, he would wear his shawl and mostly remain in seclusion the way a worried person behaves. To alleviate his worries, the Almighty lovingly addressed him as *muzzammil* and *muddaththir* so that this very address could be a source of comfort for him. It shows that the Almighty is well aware of his circumstances and when He has addressed the Prophet (sws) in such an affectionate manner, then He will surely alleviate his worries. Consequently, in the previous *sūrah*, he was addressed by the title *muzzammil* and asked to stand in prayer by night. This of course was meant to be a cure for his worries and also a preparation for a new assignment which would be later spelled out to him.

The words قُمْ فَأَنْذِر spell out this new assignment which was referred to in the previous verse by the words: إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا (٥:٧٣) (soon We shall lay on you the burden of a heavy word, (73:5)). He should arise and with full determination and resolve, warn his people and not worry of the opposition, resistance nor of the adverse and alien circumstances he was facing. If he takes up this task with grit and endurance, the Almighty will ease the way for him and strengthen him with His special divine help. I have already explained in the previous *sūrah* under 73:5 quoted earlier that these words refer to the obligation of delivering open warning to his people mentioned in this *sūrah*. Generally, people have interpreted the expression قَوْلٌ ثَقِيلٌ to mean divine revelation itself. However, divine revelations had already begun; so what was reason for saying: "I shall soon reveal to you a heavy word." On the other hand, the obligation of *indhār* (warning) was no doubt a burdensome directive. It was not at all easy to sound the message of *tawhīd* in the ears of the leaders of Makkah and Tā'if and that too with the claim that he was a Messenger of God and that if they denied his open warnings, they would be grievously punished. It was but natural for the Prophet (sws) to become apprehensive of such a

1. O ye enfolded in the shawl! Arise and warn people.

heavy responsibility. Consequently, in the initial period, he confined his preaching to his immediate family. To them too, he only communicated certain observations and experiences of his prophethood in order to elicit their reaction. This reaction in fact was of great animosity. Thus, in this period, he would often remain very anxious and worried. The words مُدَّثِّرٌ and مُزْمَلٌ portray this very state of his. The purpose for which the Almighty had sent him had to be fulfilled at all costs. So he was directed first in Sūrah Muzzammil to prepare for this situation and then in this sūrah, he was directed to fully embark on the mission of extending his sphere of preaching and deliver warnings to all the people around him.

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ²(٣)

This is the first directive of *indhār* referred to earlier. The belief of *tawhīd* (monotheism) has formed the basic ingredient in the preaching mission of the prophets of God; this meant the proclamation of God's greatness and exaltedness alone. Since the object of the verb in this verse has been placed before the verb, it has resulted in specifying this declaration for God only. In other words, whoever other than God claim greatness or whose greatness is claimed by others are all false and baseless. The Prophet (sws) should only proclaim the greatness of God. In the *jāhili* society of Arabia, this declaration was no less than inviting the wrath and anger of the whole society. However, since the foundation of religion is on *tawhīd*, every prophet was required to openly declare it without showing any hesitation.

وَتِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ³(٤)

The word تِيَابٌ is the plural of ثِيَابٌ and means “cloth”. However, it can also refer to the heart. In fact, a study of classical Arabic shows that this word also means “the heart's apparel”. Imru' u al-Qays has said:

وإن تك قد ساءتك مني خليفة

فصلي ثيابي من ثيابك تنسل

(If any of my actions has upset you, then separate your heart's apparel from mine, and you will be separated from me.)⁴

2. And proclaim the greatness of your Lord only.

3. And cleanse the apparel [of your heart].

4. Imru' al-Qays, *Dīwān*, 2.

In this couplet, the poet has used the word ثياب to connote the heart, and this meaning can only be taken when it is metaphorically understood to mean “the heart’s apparel”.

Imru’u al-Qays has also said:

ثياب بني عوف طهاري نقية

(The hearts of Banū ‘Awf are absolutely clean)⁵

While keeping this meaning of the word ثِيَاب in mind, the verse would mean that the Prophet (sws) should declare the greatness and oneness of God without any fear. However much as his opponents may force him and make various excuses, he should not let the slightest trace of polytheism contaminate his heart. It should remain clear that the Qur’ān in very explicit terms has called the polytheists filthy and polytheism filth. The Prophet (sws) has been given this directive because in the later phases of his mission the leaders of the Quraysh presented a compromising formula as per which they would accept all what he said on the condition that he agree to regard some status to their deities. However, the Prophet (sws) emphatically rejected this demand and he was also directed by the Almighty that *tawhīd* is the basis of religion and that he should not compromise in any way in this matter. Verses such as (وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ (٦٨: ٩) (they desire that you be flexible, then they will also become flexible, (68:9)) and others refer to this very aspect. In the verse under discussion too, the Prophet (sws) has been categorically told to strictly adhere to *tawhīd*. In other words, by addressing the Prophet (sws) and giving him this directive it is actually the Idolaters who are told that polytheism is such filth that a Messenger of God does not even tolerate its slightest trace.

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (٥)

The words رَجَس, رَجَز and رُجَز have very similar pronunciations and also are similar in meaning. The word رُجَز is used for the filth which makes a person feel abhorrence and disgust. It can refer to every type of filth, but here it specifically refers to the filth of polytheism, and the purpose is to stress what is said in the previous verse: وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ (and cleanse your heart’s apparel).

This directive was not required to be given to the Prophet (sws) because there was no chance of him being involved in it in any way. Just

5. Ibid., 28.

6. And keep away from impurity.

as he remained a staunch and pure monotheist after becoming a prophet, there was not the slightest trace of polytheism found in his beliefs even before this. The objective was to communicate to the disbelievers and the Idolaters that the warner who had come to them had a very definite stance on polytheism and that he had other very clear injunctions from his Lord.

وَلَا تَمُنْ تَسْكُثُرُ⁷(٦)

Just as the word مَنَّ means to do a favour to someone, it also means to cut something. In Sūrah Qalam, it is said: إِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ (٦٨:٣) (and indeed for you is a reward unending, (68:3)). The implication of the verse under discussion is that he must continue with the preaching and warning mission he has been asked to undertake, and not discontinue it thinking that he has done it to a great extent and that it was not required any more. He should carry on this divinely assigned task and only discontinue when the Almighty tells him to do so.

Grammatically, the word تَسْكُثُرُ is not the response to the negative sentence. Had it been so, it would have had a *jazm*. Though some reciters have read it with a *jazm*, however since the *mutawātir* recital is that of *dammah*, hence, I would prefer to read it thus, and have interpreted it with a *dammah*. In such a case, the word should either be regarded to be in the capacity of an accusative of state (*ḥāl*) or an independent sentence. In my opinion, it is the former.

The word اِسْتَكْثَرُ generally has two meanings. Firstly, to do something a lot or to want something a lot, and secondly, to regard or reckon something to be a lot. It is used in the first meaning in the following verse: وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ (١٨٨:٧) (Had I possessed knowledge of what is hidden, I would have availed myself of much that is good, (7:188)) and lexicographers have explained the second meaning thus: استكثر الشيء: رآه كثيرا أو عده كثيرا (the expression استكثر الشيء means to regard or count something to be a lot). The author of *Aqrab al-mawārid*⁸ has stated this second meaning first. In my opinion, in the verse under discussion, it denotes this very meaning. The verse, as pointed out earlier, would therefore mean that the Prophet (sws) should continue to discharge the responsibility of warning his people without any break and should never suspend it thinking that he has done a lot and that it was not required any more.

7. And do not discontinue your endeavour regarding it to be more.

8. Sa'īd al-Khūrī al-Shartūnī, *Aqrab al-mawārid fī fuṣaḥī al-'arabiyyah wa al-shawārid.*, 1st ed. Vol (Tehrān: Dār al-uswah, 1416 AH), .

This directive has been given because the divine law about a messenger's responsibility of warning his people is that if his people remain indifferent to it, then after giving them respite for a certain period of time, the Almighty necessarily destroys them. I have explained this law at many places in this *tafsīr*. As per this law, this time is given to them so that the truth is communicated to them to such an extent that they are left with no legitimate excuse to deny it, and only the Almighty knows how much time should be granted to a people for this purpose. The obligation of the messenger is to continue to communicate the truth and warn them of the grave consequences of denying it until the Almighty asks him to stop and tells him that he has completed his task; now he should consign their fate to Him and migrate from that land. If a messenger decides to migrate on the basis of his own assessment that he has completed his assignment, then there is a strong chance that he might end up wrongly assessing the situation and make the same mistake as Jonah (sws) made. He was rebuked by the Almighty for this decision and after putting him through a severe trial he was sent back by the Almighty to his assignment with his people. It was after he resumed this assignment and continued with it that the Almighty blessed all his people with the urge to accept faith.

In order to protect the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) from a similar expression of haste, the Almighty in the very first phase, bade him to carry out without any break, his divinely appointed task of warning his people; he should never decide for himself to discontinue this responsibility thinking he had done enough. In other words, this decision must not be taken by him; it has to be taken by God. Thus verses like (٤٨ : ٦٨) *فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ* (so with patience, wait for the judgement of your Lord and be not like the companion of the fish, (68:48)) instruct the Prophet (sws) to exercise patience and here in this *sūrah* too, the next verse conveys precisely the same message to the Prophet (sws).

Our exegetes have generally interpreted this verse to mean that the Prophet (sws) must not do a favour to someone thinking that he will receive a greater favour in return. Although it is possible to interpret this verse in this way, a question arises on this interpretation viz a viz the occasion and context of this verse. In the given context and background, what is the need for such advice for the Prophet (sws)? In my opinion, our exegetes have faltered in ascertaining the correct meaning of both words of this verse. My explanation of the verse has brought forth its true interpretation; there is no need for any further discussion on it.

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ⁹ (٧)

This verse has precisely the same meaning as: *وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا* (52:48). When the word *اصْبِرْ* is used with the preposition *لِ*, it means to wait with patience and perseverance.

The directive given in this verse relates to the previous verse: the Prophet (sws) should not discontinue his endeavour at some stage regarding it to be sufficient; he should continue with it with patience and perseverance and wait for the decision of his Lord. On this perseverance hinges not only his own success but also the communication of the truth to his people to the extent that they are not left with any excuse to deny it.

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ (٨) فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ (٩) عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ (١٠)¹⁰

Mentioned in this verse is the real subject of Prophetic warning. The foundation of every vice is merely showing indifference to it. A big reason for the Quraysh's animosity to the warning of the Prophet (sws) was that they neither believed in the Day of Judgement nor wanted to believe in it. In the first place, they regarded it to be improbable and unlikely, and if they did believe in it to any extent, then they would argue that because they have been blessed with wealth and affluence in this world, on the Day of Judgement too they would be similarly blessed. Moreover, if the Almighty intended to punish them, their deities would save them through their intercession. The verse thus warns them that the Day of Judgement which will be heralded by the sound of a trumpet will be very severe for them.

The words *عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ* say that though the disbelievers regard that day to be very for easy them, yet, on the contrary it will be stern and harsh for them.

This verse only states in a negative style what has been said earlier in a positive way and in this way is actually a very subtle sarcasm on the foolish attitude of the disbelievers: they regard it to be improbable and arrogantly express that they will reckon with it when it comes. These verses say that the day will not at all be an easy one to contend with; it will be very tough; hence, whatever is to be done for it, can only be done in this world. He who has lost this opportunity, will be seized forever and seized in such a manner that no one will be able to rescue him.

9. And show perseverance in the way of your Lord.

10. Thus, when the trumpet is sounded, that Day will be very severe. It will not be easy for the disbelievers.

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا (١١) وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا (١٢) وَبَنِينَ شُهُودًا (١٣)
وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا (١٤) ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ (١٥)¹¹

These verses admonish the megalomaniac leaders of Makkah and Tā'if. They regarded their affluence to be a sign of correctness of their beliefs and deeds and of they being God's favourites. They would thus contend that even if there was going to be a Day of Judgement there was no danger for them of which they are being warned, and would in fact be blessed with much much more. The Almighty has directed the Prophet (sws) to leave the matter of such people to Him and He is sufficient to deal with them alone. The Prophet (sws) should not be worried about them.

The style ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا of the verse is very similar to (and leave the matter of these rejecters who enjoy the comforts of life to Me and give them a little respite, (73:11)) mentioned in the previous *sūrah*. I have explained it there.

The expression خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا refers to the fact that when man comes into this world, he is without wealth and status and without comrades and confidants. He receives these things only because of God's special favour, and they remain with him as long as the Almighty wishes them to. His obligation towards this favour is that he should become very grateful to God. This favour should not make him arrogantly believe that he is God's favourite and that if ever there is going to be a Day of Judgement, he will receive even more of God's blessings. At another place, this subject is mentioned in the following words: وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ (٩٤:٦) (and now you have returned to Us alone, as We created you the first time, (6:94)). In other words, the verse is directing the Prophet (sws) to leave such an arrogant and grandiose person to the Almighty; he came into this world alone and when the Almighty gave him wealth and status he became conceited, and now that he is being told to fear the Hereafter, he becomes even more conceited by saying that he will receive even more blessings of God in the Hereafter.

Here the question arises whether the verse is referring to a particular person or is it referring to the mentality of the generally affluent people of Makkah and Tā'if. Exegetes are of the opinion that the reference is to Walīd ibn Mughīrah, a leader of the Quraysh. In my opinion there is no reason for restricting the verse to him. The mentality depicted here is not

11. Leave to Me whom I have created alone and bestowed abundant wealth and sons abiding in his presence and well smoothed out for him the way. Still he expects that I shall give him more.

just that of Walīd ibn Mughīrah; it is that of all the leaders and affluent people of the Quraysh. And such is the universal nature of this trait that most people who are rich and also have a high status end up with this despicable mentality. Very few people are able to protect themselves from this contagious disease. Thus it would not be proper to believe that these verses have been revealed with regard to Walīd ibn Mughīrah. Of course the mentality and character they depict also apply to him. I have already explained in the introduction to this *tafsīr* that when our early scholars say that a particular verse has been revealed with regard to a specific person, they do not necessarily imply that the verse was revealed because of that person; at times, they intend to refer to just one application of the verse. The subject discussed here is raised at many other places as well, and at all such places the purpose of the Qur’ān is to point out the common mentality of the arrogant people and not to some specific person.

It should also be kept in consideration that the word مَنْ used here which is used for both singular and plural entities, and both types of antecedents can be used for it.

The sentence *وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا* refers to the fact that when he came into this world, he was without any wealth or children; he came without any resources nor with helpers or supporters. It was purely a favour of God that He gave him assets which were spread out. This means that at some places he had orchards, at others houses; similarly, if one area housed his sheep and cattle, others boasted his agricultural lands, business ventures and shops. The capitalists of these times have bank accounts in every country and investments in companies found all over the world; they must also be counted among the category of “spread out wealth”.

The expression *وَوَيْنَ شُهَدَا* refers to the fact that not only the Almighty blessed him with wealth, he also blessed him with sons who were his supporters in every place and front, and who were there to help his widely scattered business ventures. It needs to be appreciated that in a tribal system, the support and help of a family has always occupied a great status. On this depended the survival and defence of a tribe. The person who had the most sons and family members would be made the leader of a tribe, and the sons too had to be so capable and alert that they could stand by the side of their father whenever any need arose.

The words *وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا* refer to the fact that by blessing him with wealth and sons the path of attaining respect and dignity, leadership and say in the society was paved for him.

The verse *ثُمَّ يَظْمَعُ أَنْ أَرِيدَ* implies that the obligation of divine favours bestowed on him was that he be a grateful and obedient person to his Lord. On the contrary, after receiving these divine favours, he became

arrogant and haughty. When he would be warned that a day is to come which will be very severe on the ungrateful and the disbelievers, he would claim that if ever such a day will come he will receive even more favours than he has received here.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا (١٦)¹²

This verse is an emphatic negation of the false claim of such megalomaniacs. Their dream is going to be shattered. The favours bestowed on them by the Almighty were neither because they were entitled to them nor because they had earned them through their own planning; they were given to them purely as a blessing of the Almighty to test whether they remain grateful and obedient to Him or become rebellious to Him and show arrogance and spread disorder in the land. It became evident from this test that they became the enemies of God after receiving these favours. The word “verses” here refer to the verses of the Qur’ān in general and in particular those who warn them of the worldly punishment and the one they will face in the next world and are ones which inform them that in this world it is only the Almighty who runs its affairs and in the next also, only He will be running the affairs as the supreme Lord.

سَأُرْهِقُهُ صَعُودًا (١٧)¹³

The word إِرْهَاقٌ means “to put someone through hardship” and صَعُودٌ refers to a peak or a steep slope which is very difficult to climb.

The verse actually mentions the punishment for showing ingratitude to the favours spelled out in the verse وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا above. After receiving favours, they started to cherish and worship these favours forgetting the Being Who had given them these favours and started to worship their own desires. Such was the extent of this worship that they could not find in themselves the courage to fight any of their desires. For this reason, they will be made to climb a mounting slope in the Hereafter.

Here one needs to keep in mind the nature of virtue and vice: the Almighty has given man an awareness of the two; at the same time, He has put him through a test that the pleasures of vice are immediate and its pangs have been deferred to the Hereafter; on the other hand, hardships are encountered immediately when a person treads the path of virtue and its benefits are deferred. The result is that when a person adopts the path of virtue, his inner desires oppose him at every step and make him climb steep slopes, and if he adopts the path of vice, then he does gain

12. Certainly not! He has turned out to be an enemy of Our revelations.

13. Soon I will make him climb a mounting slope.

immediate pleasures and he thinks that the punishment of this vice is far-fetched. Because of this attraction, the majority adopts this path. Only those people have the courage to adopt the path of virtue who have perseverance and fortitude in them and to inculcate these qualities a person has to really work hard. While pointing to this very aspect Jesus (sws) is reported to have said: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew, 7:13-14)

In Sūrah Balad, the words used are:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ فَكُ رَقَبَةً أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُوصَدَةٌ (٩٠: ١٠-٢٠)

And We have shown man the two ways that lead to good and evil. But he did not surmount the steep path. And what have you understood what this steep path is? Freeing of a slave or feeding, in days of famine, of an orphan near of kin or an indigent [down] in the dust – then he be of those who accepted faith and who counselled one another to be patient and sympathetic. (90: 10-20)

The Qur'ān regards only those people to be worthy of success in the Hereafter who have the courage to surmount the steep path of virtue in this world. Those who will not show the courage to surmount it in this world will have to face the steep path of Hell. They will be forced to cross it but they will not be able to do so.

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ (١٨) فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (١٩) ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (٢٠) ثُمَّ نَظَرَ (٢١) ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ (٢٢) ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ (٢٣) فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ (٢٤) إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ (٢٥)¹⁴

It is said in verse sixteen: "he has turned out to be an enemy of Our

14. He pondered and schemed. Cursed be he; what he schemed! Then cursed be he, what a wrong scheme he made. Then he looked about. Then he frowned and made a face. Then he turned away and became arrogant. Then said: "This is nothing but a magic which is being handed down from the past! It is nothing but the word of man!"

revelations.” Depicted in these verses is a picture of this animosity, and if one deeply deliberates on these verses, one will conclude that it is a very comprehensive picture.

The words *إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ* imply that when the Qur’ān was recited to him, instead of showing his reaction immediately, he took some time to ponder so that the onlookers would think that their leader was taking the matter seriously and would express his opinion after pondering over it. The word *وَقَدَّرَ* means that after pondering over the matter, he thoroughly weighed the opinion that came to his mind so that what he uttered would find roots in the hearts of people, and everyone would vouch for the veracity of the opinion expressed.

He is cursed twice in the verses *فَقَتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ* even before his opinion is expressed. The reason for this emphatic disapproval is not only to express the hideous nature of his opinion, but also to make the listeners aware of how foolishly a person talks when he has lost his senses; he tries to convince people that a pebble is a pearl and thinks that there is no one as intellectually gifted as him.

The verses *ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى عَصَ وَكَانَ مُتَسَكِّبًا أَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ وَاسْتَكَبَرَ* portray the arrogant style he adopted while expressing his opinion. A little deliberation will show that such is the graphic nature of this portrayal by the Qur’ān that even if his opinion is not expressed, a connoisseur of such a style will easily understand what opinion this style reflects. First, in a state of deep reflection, he lifted his face assessing the faces of the people in order to judge their moods and see whether it was the right time to express his opinion. He then frowned and made a face so that those who saw him came to know merely through his demeanour that he had formed a very hopeless opinion about the Book of God. He then very arrogantly turned away muttering some words under his breath.

Although there was no further need for any detail after the above mentioned portrayal since his style and demeanour were enough to reveal his opinion, the Qur’ān has still gone on to cite the venomous words he said while arrogantly walking away *قَالَ إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ* (he said that the Qur’ān is mere sorcery and magic and that it is only a human discourse).

I have pointed many times in this *tafsīr* to the reason on account of which the Quraysh often called the Qur’ān to be magic: when it no longer was possible for them to deny its miraculous eloquence and its potent influence, they embarked upon a propaganda campaign against it and started calling it magic so that the common masses were led to believe that it was not divine and that they need not be overawed by it in this regard. Thus by calling it magic they wanted to make people believe

that the reason for its tremendous efficacy was not that it was divine but that it was mere magic of words and that it was not something unique so as to have come into creation for the first time and be specific to the Qur'ān only. It was something which existed from previous times. The implication is that many orators and poets lived in their country whose works had this magic; however, no one regarded them to be messengers of God and nor did they themselves claim to be so and nor did anyone regard their work to be of divine origin, so what then was the characteristic of this discourse that it be regarded divine.

The verse *إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ* says that this is merely a human discourse. It may hold its audience spellbound but should not be elevated to the divine.

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ (٢٦) وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ (٢٧) لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ (٢٨)¹⁵

Portrayed in these verses is the fate of such an arrogant person. The verse *وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ* is an expression of the horrific nature of Hell. It should not be regarded as something ordinary. Its horror cannot be judged in this world. Only those will have an idea of it who encounter it. Unfortunate is he who spends his life in indifference to it. It needs to be noted that such an address is general in nature and there is no reason to regard it to be directed at the Prophet (sws).

Consider next the verse: *لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ*. The phrase *أُبْقِي عَلَيْهِ* means “to show mercy and clemency.” Though the preposition is not mentioned here and neither is there any occasion for its mention, however the verb is used here in this very meaning. The implication is that such will be the horrific and oppressive nature of Hell that it will neither show the slightest of mercy to anyone by reducing its agony for its dwellers nor will it ignore anyone allowing that person to go free. In other words, one should neither expect mercy from it nor being ignored by it. It will be ruthless to the ultimate extent and also fully vigilant.

لَوَاحِئُهُ لِلْبَشَرِ (٢٩)¹⁶

The word *بَشَر* refers to the body-skin. Such will be the reach of the flames of the fire of Hell that the skin of the criminals will start to burn even from a distance. In Sūrah Ma'ārij, the words used are: *نَزَاعَةٌ لِّلَّسَوَى* (١٦:٧٠). Depicted here are the effects of the intensity of heat caused by Hell-fire which will begin even before the criminals enter Hell. The

15. I will soon cast him into Hell. And what have you understood what Hell is? It will neither show mercy nor spare anyone.

16. It scorches the skin.

purpose is to inform them that the climax of the torment whose commencement is so intense can only be imagined.

عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ (٣٠)¹⁷

Here the noun qualified by the number nineteen is not mentioned; however, the succeeding verse tells us that this number refers to angels. Their veiled reference in this verse shows that their temperament, appearance and powers will be absolutely harmonious with their nature of duty. By merely seeing them, criminals will be able to evaluate that they will not show the slightest mercy to anyone nor is there any possibility of being liberated from their grasp.

Here it is possible that a question may arise in someone's mind regarding the number of angels guarding Hell. What is the wisdom in their number being nineteen. Also, why has the Qur'ān so emphatically enumerated them even if they were nineteen. The Qur'ān itself has answered this question in the next verse; however, before this answer is discussed an essential point should be understood as a prelude.

As far as the Hereafter is concerned, its arguments are found in human intellect and human nature as well as the world inside man and the one that lies outside him. The Qur'ān has delineated all these arguments in detail. As far as the details of Paradise and Hell are concerned, they are of the category of the *mutashābihāt* whose actual form and reality are only known to God. He has tried to communicate them to us through similes and parables. Through this we can have a general idea of them; however, we cannot grasp their true form. If a person insists on finding out their true form he will go astray and instead of benefiting from this information, he will reject the reality which is based on absolute arguments of sense and reason. In such matters, the right attitude that a person of intellect should adopt is to believe in whatever the Almighty has told him and have faith in the fact that the true form of such things will become apparent when they will actually manifest themselves one day. The Qur'ān has explained this aspect thus in Sūrah Āl-i-Imrān:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا
يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا (٣: ٧)

It is He who has revealed to you the Book. In it are verses *muhkam*

17. Over it are nineteen angels.

[based on argument of sense and reason] – they are the foundation of the Book – and others *mutashābih* [in which facts are portrayed in symbolic form]. Then those whose hearts are warped always go after the *mutashābih* among them in order to create dissension and in order to know their reality even though no one except God knows their reality. As for those who are well-grounded in knowledge, they say: “We believe in these all. These *mutashābih* verses like the *muhkam* ones have been revealed from our Lord.” (3:7)

Such warped personalities always exist. Among the Quraysh and the People of the Book too such mischievous elements existed. So as soon as the Qur’ān mentioned nineteen angels, it also warned them forthwith (in the subsequent verses) that although people prone to mischief will use this information to spread mischief, the Almighty mentions such facts to increase the knowledge of true students and the contaminated nature of those who are prone to mischief is fully highlighted. With this background, readers may now read the subsequent verses.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَيَقِنَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْبَشَرِ (٣١)¹⁸

This verse, as indicated earlier, is an immediate warning. It is not true that this verse was revealed much later in Madīnah. The copulative particle *waw* shows that it is connected to the previous verse and revealed together with it. Verses which are revealed later and placed with verses revealed earlier are not so closely connected and are independent in nature. One example of this is verse twenty of Sūrah Muzzammil which was revealed in Madīnah. Its independent nature from the previous verses is evident. It does not begin with a copulative particle the

18. -- And We have appointed none but angels as the keepers of Hell and have mentioned their number only to make it a test for those who have disbelieved. So that the People of the Book receive assurance from this and the believers may increase in their faith and that the People of the Book and the believers have no doubt about it. And so that those who have an ailment in their hearts and those who have disbelieved say: “What can God mean by this mention?” In this way, God leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases. And no one knows the armies of your Lord except He. And this matter is just a reminder for man.

way the verse under discussion does. Here it is evident that it was revealed together with the previous verses, and the purpose was to make the Prophet (sws) aware of the mentality of the mischievous people in a broad manner. He is told that when these people hear such things from him, they will make fun of them; however, the Prophet (sws) must not pay any attention to their arrogant talk; the Almighty mentions such facts to increase the knowledge of the believers and to highlight the corrupted mentality of the mischievous.

The section of the verse وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا implies that just as the Almighty has appointed angels and not the jinn and devils to conduct all the affairs of this universe, similarly he has appointed the angels over Hell. No other creature has been appointed for this task. This further implies that all the affairs of the Almighty are managed by angels who are His pure and noble creation. This is to safeguard the fact that His will is implemented in the manner He wants to and there is not the slightest deviation in this regard. Thus angels are deputed as the keepers of Hell.

Found in this sentence is also the answer to mischief-mongers who could have said that when together with the criminals, the angels will also be in Hell what is there to fear? The implication is that if they want, they can indulge in such arrogant talk, but they should remember that there is a world of difference between the inmates of a prison and its guards; they will get to know this difference when they encounter the angels deputed in the prison of Hell.

The expression وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا alludes to the wisdom behind the number of angels: this number is mentioned so that it becomes a means of trial for the disbelievers of the Day of Judgement and it presents them with an opportunity to say whatever they want to against it. It needs to be appreciated that the Almighty has placed trials in every sphere of life through which the hidden vices of the wrong-doers and the concealed virtues of the righteous come to light. In the absence of these trials, neither can the hidden potentials of a person come to the foreground nor can the evil and righteous people be distinguished from one another. Consequently, while mentioning Paradise and Hell, the Almighty has also stated some facts which became a means of trial for the disbelievers. For example, the observations stated by the Prophet (sws) in his divine journey to the heavens or the Qur'ān's mention of the tree of *zaqqūm* in Hell. By referring to them, the opponents made fun of the Prophet (sws) as well as of Paradise and Hell. In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, it is said:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ (٦٠:١٧)

We have made the vision which We showed you, as well as the tree cursed in the Qur'ān a trial for the opponents. (17:60)

The Almighty has explained at various places in the Qur'ān the wisdom behind giving opportunity to devils among the jinn and men in creating mischief against the truth. In Sūrah Hajj, it is stated:

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُنْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ (٥٤-٥٣: ٢٢)

God gives this chance so that what the devils say against the truth becomes a trial for those in whose hearts there is an ailment or whose hearts are hardened. And these wrongdoers are occupied in a long confrontation so that those who are endowed with knowledge may realize that this is the truth from your Lord. (22:53-54)

I have discussed this subject in detail in the *tafsīr* of the above quoted verse of Sūrah Hajj. It can be looked up for details.

Similarly, when it was said in this verse that nineteen angels will be the guards of Hell, it was also stated that though the wicked will make this a means of stirring mischief yet in accordance with the law of God this trial is necessary; it is through this trial that the evil found in people with corrupt hearts will be exposed; similarly, through this trial, the faith and knowledge of people who are searching for the truth will be strengthened. Consequently, it is mentioned in some narratives that when the arrogant among the Quraysh heard that only nineteen angels are deputed over Hell, they said if this was their number then there was nothing to fear of and that they would easily be able to overpower them; someone boasted that he alone was enough for a certain number and that one of his comrades would be enough to deal with the rest.

In the sentence: لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا the particle ل (lā) is meant to express the consequence: the consequence of this struggle between good and evil is that the conviction of the true People of the Book will be augmented, and the faith of those who have embraced faith will be strengthened.

Contextual indication shows that the expression أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ refers to sincere People of the Book. Those among them who really believed in their books had no pretext to make fun of such statements of the Qur'ān because similar statements were found in their own books. When they saw such statements in the Qur'ān also their belief was reinforced. It was

these People of the Book who later embraced Islam.

The reason why the faith of the believers is reinforced is because whatever is said against it comes before them and they are able to fully evaluate that the objections of the opponents carry no weight. Opposites are recognized by opposites. If a person adopts one aspect of a thing once both aspects are evident to him, then he does so on the basis of his intellect. If he accepts the aspect of faith, then his faith is not blind; it is based on understanding. He accepts it with full conviction and every trial increases his faith. The faith of people who blindly believe has no roots and for this reason at times even a slight adverse wind is enough to shake it.

The sentence وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ states in a negative sense what is stated above in a positive manner. The reason that the Almighty puts people through such trials is that the true People of the Book and the believers are secured from the onslaughts of doubt. In other words, this is an anticipatory precautionary measure to protect a person from doubts.

Here it should be kept in consideration that the sincere People of the Book are also mentioned adjacent to the believers even though this *sūrah*, as alluded to earlier, is from among the early Makkan *sūrahs* when Muslims had yet to directly encounter the People of the Book. Consequently, this is one of the reasons due to which some people have regarded this *sūrah* to be Madīnan. However, in my opinion this view is not correct. The sincere among the People of the Book were counted as Muslims and for this very reason the Almighty from the very beginning has mentioned them as the vanguard of the believers. The reason for this mention was that it should become evident to them from the very first day the role they were required to play viz a viz the new prophet, what their status was in the eyes of God, what circumstances awaited them, the measures which the Almighty was taking to strengthen their faith and how they should remain vigilant to make use of them.

In the sentence وَلَيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا the effect these *mutashābihāt* would produce on the jealous Jews and the die-hard disbelievers is expressed.

People have generally taken الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ to refer to the Hypocrites. They contend that the word مَرَضٌ (disease) mentioned in the Qur'ān always refers to hypocrisy. This, however, is not correct. I have explained at a number of places in this *tafsīr* that this word also refers to jealousy and envy, and on such occasions it refers to the Jews because they were jealous of the Ishmaelites as well as of the Prophet (sws). The details of this jealousy are mentioned in Sūrah Baqarah. Earlier, the sincere People of the Book were mentioned; here, in contrast, the jealous

Jews are mentioned and simultaneously the word الْكَافِرُونَ refers to the disbelievers among the Quraysh signifying the fact that both factions will adopt the same attitude about the *mutashābihāt*. They will exclaim: مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا (what can God mean by this mention?)

I have already explained what they mean by this statement under verse twenty six of Sūrah Baqarah: After hearing such a thing from the *mutashābihāt*, they will make a face and arrogantly object at the reason for God stating such parables. In other words, what they wanted to say was that these were nonsensical things and the Almighty does not say such nonsensical things; the person who is ascribing such things to Him is, God forbid, nonsensical too and his claim to prophethood is absolutely false.

The implication of the sentence كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ is that by putting people through such trials and tests the Almighty leads astray whomsoever among them He wants and guides whomsoever He wants. Here one should keep in mind what has been explained in this *tafsīr* many times: Every wish and intention of God is governed by His wisdom. He leads only those people astray whom He finds worthy of this treatment and those who are worthy of being guided as per His law are guided by Him. The following verse of Sūrah Baqarah has precisely the same context:

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ (٢: ٢٦)

Then those who accept faith know that it is a truth from their Lord; as for those who disbelieved, they will say: “What does Allah mean by this similitude?” God misleads many by it, and many He leads into the right path; and in reality He misleads by it only those who are disobedient. (2:26)

The sentence وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ is a scathing criticism on the claim of these criticizers to knowing everything. They should not think that they have knowledge of all the secrets of the universe. This is an absolutely false claim. No one except the Almighty knows about His armies. Only He knows their size and the capability of each of His army units and the nature of weapons with which each regiment is equipped and the identity and number of soldiers at a particular front. Neither does any person have all this knowledge nor can he have such knowledge. In whatever amount the Almighty makes His creatures aware of the secrets of this universe should be honoured and valued by them and regarded by

them to be an invaluable addition to their treasure of knowledge. They should not conceitedly think that the universe is just what they are able to see.

It needs to be kept in consideration that in these times also our pseudo-intellectuals who have raised objections against the Qur'ān or interpreted it according to their whims have done so by arrogantly regarding themselves to be know-alls. They either rejected what their limited intellect could not understand, and if they could not muster the courage to do so, they tried to interpret it in such a manner which took them even way beyond rejecting such things.

The sentence وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْبَشَرِ spells out the purpose of the verses which depict the circumstances of the Hereafter: these warning-laden verses are not meant for criticism; they are meant to remind and admonish people so that those who want to protect themselves from this eternal torment are able to prepare for this. The Almighty has informed them of this danger by reminding them of it. It is up to people to benefit from this. Those who will not benefit from it will have no excuse left before the Almighty. The practice and law of God of providing guidance to His creatures is that He informs them of virtue and vice. It is against His law to forcibly make them adopt the path of virtue.

Our exegetes have generally regarded the antecedent of the pronoun هِيَ to be سَقَر (Hell). In my opinion, however, it refers to the verses in which Hell and its punishments are depicted. The reason I hold this view is that it is these verses which hold the status of ذِكْرٌ (reminder) and not سَقَر.

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ (٣٢) وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ (٣٣) وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا أَصْفَرَ (٣٤)¹⁹

In these verses, oaths are sworn by various manifestations of nature and stressed that the Hereafter and Hell, of which people are being informed, are among the great certainties of this universe. They are sure to come; however, since every work of the Almighty is gradual in nature, they will come at the time appointed for them; they cannot come before that time. It is foolish to surmise that they will never come if they have not come as yet. If one wants to get rid of the night soon and wants the day to rise earlier than its appointed time, then this haste will not be successful in its aim. Similar is the case of the Day of Judgement. A time has been appointed for it. It will come precisely at that time.

First of all, an oath is sworn by the moon in كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ. The particle of negation كَلَّا (certainly not) before it is meant to strongly negate the view

19. Certainly not! The moon bears witness and the night also when it turns its back and the morning when it shines forth.

of the addressees. Examples of such negation are found in various Qur'ānic oaths mentioned in the previous *sūrahs*. On such occasions, the speaker wants to immediately negate a view of the addressees and does not even want to first cite the reason for this negation and then express negation. The intensity of dislike of this view is so strong that he begins by this negation and then through the oath itself expresses the reason for this.

I have explained at various instances that such oaths mentioned in the Qur'ān are meant to substantiate a claim which is generally stated after the oath. Here the addressees are the disbelievers of the Day of Judgement as is evident from the context, and their doubt under discussion is why the Day of Judgement is not coming if it is destined to come. The moon is cited before them as an example. They are told that just as the moon slowly and gradually becomes full, in a similar manner, they too shall gradually reach the place they are being informed of, and then witness the manifestation of the perfect justice of their Lord. Just as the moon passes through various phases in its journey,²⁰ and it must pass through them before it reaches its culmination however much a person may show haste for this, similarly, the Day of Judgement will come after various phases pass. It will not come unless these phases pass.

Every change which comes in this universe comes in accordance with the scheme devised by the Almighty. No one's desire or haste can intervene in it. This day will definitely come and without its advent the very objective of this universe will not stand fulfilled. However, it will come in accordance with the exact time appointed for it by the Almighty.

The Almighty has substantiated various facts of religion through the waxing and waning, and rising and setting of the moon. I have explained these at various places in this *tafsīr*. In the coming *sūrahs* too, some important aspects follow in this regard. I shall *inshallāh* explain them at these places. Here in this verse the gradual development found in the schemes of God is alluded to. The objective is to caution people who are demanding that the Day of Judgement should come soon. They are told that each of God's signs has a prescribed program. Only He knows its benefits and expediencies. What is an obvious requirement of His justice shall necessarily manifest itself; however, it will manifest at its appointed time. In Sūrah Inshiqāq also, an oath is sworn by the moon and there too precisely this very reality is referred to. It is said:

20. A verse says:

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَا مَنَازِلَ (٣٩:٣٦)

And We have ordained phases for the moon. (36:39)

وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (٨٤: ١٨-١٩)

And the moon bears witness when it grows full that you shall certainly ascend gradually. (84: 18-19)

In other words, man shall definitely come into the presence of God for accountability; however, just as the sun gradually reaches its bloom, this day too will appear after various stages pass.

After the moon, in the verses oaths are sworn by the night and day: كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا أَصْفَرَ. The night bears witness when it turns its back and the morning bears witness when it shines forth. The implication is that just as there is no sign of the morning in the darkness of night but a time comes when the morning arrives, similar will be the case with the Day of Judgement. This world is like the night whose darkness enwraps the morning of the Day of Judgement. However, as soon as the time arrives, this blanket of darkness will disappear and the Day of Judgement will arrive. The Almighty, who each day brings forth the light of the day after the night and no one is surprised by this great transformation, similarly, will bring forth the Day of Judgment whenever He wants to and at a time when everyone will see that what they regarded to be impossible has manifested itself.

The same oath, with a slight difference in words, is stated in Sūrah Takwīr to substantiate the Day of Judgement:

وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ (٨١: ١٧-١٨)

And the night bears witness as it retreats and the dawn when it breathes. (81:17-18)

I have explained at a number of places in this *tafsīr* that the Almighty has created this universe in such a manner that at some place or the other a continuous rehearsal of the Day of Judgement is going on. The objective is to provide man from his very surroundings the corroboration of such a day in case he has doubts about it. For a sincere person who is searching for the truth, such evidence is enough to convince him.

إِنَّهَا لِأَحَدَى الْكُبَرِ (٣٥) نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ (٣٦)²¹

These verses are the complement (*muqṣam bihi*) of the oaths mentioned in the previous verses: these verses of the Qur'ān which have been revealed to inform people of the horrors of Hell are no jest. They depict a

21. That this matter is from among the great matters narrated to warn man.

great upheaval which is going to take place. Unfortunate are the people who, instead of learning a lesson from them, are making fun of them.

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ (٣٧)²²

The implication of this verse is that it was essential to inform people of that dreadful Day before its arrival. This was essential so that they were not left with any excuse of not being informed and thus not prepared for it. Consequently, through His Book the Almighty has revealed the truth to such an extent that people are not left with any excuse to deny it. Whether they accept it or not, is left to them to decide; he who wants to encounter a good fate will come forward to accept it and he who is calling for his doom will show arrogance and turn away from it.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ (٣٨)²³

The implication of this verse is that just as effects are tied to their causes, souls are tied to their deeds. On the Day of Judgement, only deeds will liberate a person or annihilate him. If someone arrogantly thinks that he will be able to save himself from the torments of the Day because of his high status and pedigree and through his deities and their intercession, then he should remember that none of these will be of any avail to him.

إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ (٣٩) فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٤٠) عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (٤١)²⁴

On that Day, only the People of the Right Hand will succeed. I have already explained who they are at some place in this *tafsīr*. They are people who spent this life while keeping in consideration the life to come and whose accounts shall be handed over to them in their right hands. This verse says that not only will they be rewarded commensurate with their deeds, they will be blessed with even more reward as a favour by the Almighty.

The nature of the question and answer mentioned in these verses becomes very evident from the following verse of Sūrah S@āffāt; they will also find an opportunity during the course of this conversation to address the companions of Hell and find out from them the reason which led them to this abode:

22. For every person among you who wants to advance forward or wants to turn away.

23. Every soul shall be held in pledge for its own deeds.

24. The only exception will be the people of the right hand. They will be in gardens inquiring after the wrongdoers.

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ قَالِ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ يَقُولُ أَأُنْثَكَ
لَمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَأَنْتَا لَمَدِينُونَ قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّطْلَعُونَ
فَاطْلَعَ فَرَأَاهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ (٣٧: ٥٠-٥٥)

The companions of Paradise will turn to each other while posing questions to each other. One will say: "I had a friend who used to say: 'Are you also among those who attest to the Day of Judgement? When we are dead and turned to dust and bones, shall we ever be brought to judgement?'" They will say: 'Go and take a peep.' He will look down and see his friend in the very midst of Hell. (37:50-55)

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ (٤٢)²⁵

This question shall be posed to the companions of Hell by the companions of Paradise while the latter will be questioning each other about the fate of the former.

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ (٤٣) وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمِ الْمِسْكِينَ (٤٤) وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ
الْحَائِضِينَ (٤٥) وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤٦) حَتَّى أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ (٤٧)²⁶

The companions of Hell will, in response, acknowledge that it is their misdeeds which had brought them to Hell and no one else is to blame for this fate.

The first of these misdeeds is that they were not among those who prayed. It needs to be kept in consideration that just as in beliefs the belief of monotheism occupies primary importance, similarly, in deeds the prayer occupies primary importance. All prophets called people to this deed the foremost and informed them that adhering to it or rejecting it distinguishes believers from disbelievers.

The second misdeed that they will admit is their lack of spending in the way of God: they were not among those who fed the poor. After the prayer, spending in the way of God is the second most important deed of religion and upon these two pillars is built the edifice of all righteous deeds. I have alluded many times in this *tafsīr* to the fact that the prayer is instrumental in establishing a person's relationship with his Lord while

25. "What has brought you into Hell?"

26. They will reply: "We were not among those who prayed nor did we feed the poor and we used to quibble with these quibblers and used to deny this Day of Reckoning till there came to us this moment of certainty."

the *zakāh* is instrumental in establishing a person's relationship with his fellow human beings and on the institution of both these relationships depends one's relationship with one's religion.

After this, they will confess that they too indulged in frivolous and foolish talk regarding the Day of Judgement as others used to, and it was because of such frivolous talk that they denied this Day until death overcame them. Death brought them face to face with all the realities they doubted.

The verse *وَكُنَّا نَحُورُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ* refers to their statements as the ones alluded to above about the number of angels deputed over Hell.

The expression *خوض في الحديث* means "to raise trivial objections in something and in the process exceed limits and to make it a reason for creating mischief and deviation."

Consider next the expression: *حَتَّى أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ*. The real meaning of the word *يَقِينُ* is "certainty"; however, since after death all post-death facts become evident to a person and he is forced to acknowledge their certainty, for this reason death is also called *يَقِينُ*. This is like referring to something by naming it after its consequence.

The confessions of the sinners which are cited here substantiate what is said in a preceding verse: *كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ* (every soul shall be held in pledge for its own deeds). The objective is to open the eyes and ears of the foolish who on the bases of their creed and lineage and deities and their intercession were making fun of reward and punishment and through the very tongue of their friends and associates they are told that before the Almighty nothing except righteous deeds will be of any benefit for a person.

فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ (٤٨)²⁷

This is a negation of their self-claimed deities and their alleged intercession.

The style of the verse here is technically called *نفي الشيء بنفي لازمه* (negating a thing by negating its consequence). Imru' al-Qays while describing a desert-route has said *لَا يُهْتَدَى بِمَنَارِهِ* (its towers are not helpful in finding the way). This obviously means that it does not have any towers at all that help be sought from them. The Qur'an has unequivocally stated about the deities of the *mushrikūn* of Arabia whom they arrogantly counted on: *إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ* (٢٣:٥٣) (they are but names which you and your fathers have invented: God has vested no authority in them; they

27. So, no intercession of the intercessors will be of any use to them.

follow but vain conjectures, (53:23))

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ (٤٩)²⁸

This verse expresses wonder on the attitude of the disbelievers. They should have shown gratitude to the Almighty for being reminded in advance of the Day of reward and punishment. Not only this, they were even given a Book to inform them of the real facts of life and were also fortunate enough to be the addressees of a messenger of God. It is strange that instead of benefiting from this reminder they are showing aversion to it.

The word مُعْرِضِينَ is an accusative of state from the genitive pronoun in لَهُمْ. This is a very common style in Arabic. Many examples of this style can be seen in previous *sūrahs*.

كَانَتْهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ (٥٠) فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ (٥١)²⁹

This is an example of their state of fear and anxiety. The word قَسْوَرَةٍ means “a lion”. When donkeys and zebras run after hearing the roar of a lion they seldom stop. At the slightest of sounds, they dart away as if a lion has actually come near them. This verse says that the state of affairs of these disbelievers is no different. They are so afraid of this reminder that they do not have the courage to listen to even a single word of it.

It should be kept in consideration that when something is so obvious that one's heart is not satisfied even after rejecting it and is also not ready to accept it, then this state of escapism and evasion is very similar to the example cited in this verse. Such people desire and also strive that their ears hear not a single word that may remind them of this reality.

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى صُحُفًا مُنَشَّرَةً (٥٢)³⁰

The excuse which the disbelievers have fabricated to escape from this reminder is that why was such a book revealed to Muḥammad; why were not open scrolls handed to each one of them; surely this was not at all difficult for the Almighty. At another place, it is similarly said:

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَى مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ

28. What then is the matter with them that they are turning away from the Reminder.

29. As though they are frightened asses fleeing from a lion?

30. In fact, each one of them desires that he be handed open scrolls.

يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ (١٤٤:٦)

And when a sign is revealed to them they say: “We will not believe in it unless we are given that which God’s prophets have been given.” – God only knows best whom to entrust with His message. (6:124)

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ (٥٣)³¹

The implication of this verse is that neither is this going to happen nor is there any need for it to happen. The reason for their evasion is not what they are expressing; the reason for it is that they do not expect the Day of Judgement to come. The word يَخَافُونَ here means يَرْجُونَ and this is a common meaning of it. I have already presented its examples in an earlier discussion. In other words, since they have no fear of the Hereafter and their heart’s desire is also to have no fear of it and that its fear should not spoil their luxurious lifestyle, so no sign can convince them. If according to their desire they are handed over open scrolls, even then they will come up with some other excuse.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذَكُّرٌ (٥٤) فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكِّرْهُ (٥٥)³²

These verses express indifference to these stubborn people and sound assurance to the Prophet (sws). The implication is that he should not bear the tantrums of such people. The Qur’ān is a reminder to them. It is up to them to benefit from it and adopt the right path. If they do not benefit from it, they will bear the consequences themselves. Whatever they do, they will not harm God or His Prophet. The practice of the Almighty is that before He seizes people He reminds them so that they are left with no excuse, and it is the responsibility of the Messenger to deliver this reminder to people. Neither is the Messenger responsible of forcibly making people accept guidance nor is it the law of the Almighty to force people who are averse to guidance to accept it.

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ (٥٦)³³

Stated in these verses is the law of God about providing guidance to people, and which has been discussed at many places in this *tafsīr*: He

31. Certainly not! They, in fact, have no fear of the Hereafter.

32. Certainly not! This is just a Reminder. So let him, who wills, take heed.

33. – and they do not take heed unless God so wills. He alone is pious and worthy of being forgiven.

guides only those people who use their faculties of sight, hearing and intellect and who honour the light of innate guidance and who reflect on the signs of God found within them and in the world around them and who are ready to hear and understand every reasonable thing even though it is against their heart's desires. Everything willed by the Almighty is governed by His wisdom. He guides only those people who value guidance. Those who do not value it are penalized and their ability to benefit from their innate guidance is lost what to speak of being provided further guidance from God. Jesus (sws) has said some very appropriate words in this regard and I have alluded to them at various places in this *tafsīr*.

In the sentence *هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ* our exegetes generally regard the antecedent of the pronoun *هُوَ* to be God and interpret the verse to mean that only God is worthy of being feared of and worthy of being asked forgiveness from. In my opinion, however, it relates to *فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ*. The pronoun *مَنْ* is used both for singular and plural entities. Thus both singular and plural pronouns can be used for it. In other words, this verse informs us who will benefit from the reminders of the Qur'ān and as a result be worthy of being forgiven and who will be deprived of it: those who have God's fear, in them will benefit from these reminders and will be worthy of God's forgiveness. As for those whose hearts are devoid of God's fear, they will be deprived of this benefit and when they will be deprived of this, then they will also be deprived of God's forgiveness. In Sūrah Baqarah, under the verse *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* (2:4), I have already explained who will benefit from the Qur'ān and who will be deprived of it. Readers who wish to know the details of this divine practice are advised to look up the *tafsīr* of this verse. There are various levels of *taqwā*. The *taqwā* referred to in this verse is the one which is ingrained in human nature by the Almighty and which is alluded to in the verse *فَالْهَمَّهَا فَجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا* (8:91) (then [God] inspired it with its evil and its good, (91:8)). In the next *sūrah*, a complete picture of this *taqwā* ingrained in human nature will inshallāh be presented.

With the help and grace of God, with these lines, I come to the end of this *sūrah's tafsīr*. *فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى إِحْسَانِهِ* (gratitude be to God for His favours)

Rahmānābād,

18th Decemeber 1978 AD

17th Muḥarrām al-Ḥarām 1399 AH